

THE

PASTOR AND THE LEAGUE.

BY

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DEDICATION.

TO THE THOUSANDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE
IN ALL OUR METHODISMS,
LOYAL LEAGUERS THAT ARE AND ARE TO BE,
THIS LITTLE LABOR OF LOVE
IS AFFECTIONATELY AND PRAYERFULLY
INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THE author's only apology for this little book is its need. The Methodist Church, as it seems to him, needs the Epworth League as, at this point in her history, she needs nothing else—and she can have it. Each individual church can have the League. Whether each church *will* have it or not depends, more than upon any other, it may be more than upon all others combined, upon the pastor. Some pastors—many, the great majority, all but a small minority—have thus far failed to recognize these important facts; or, seeing the first, have quite overlooked the second. (I trust that my not altogether limited observation misleads me in so strong a statement as the above.) A few though steadily increasing number of pastors have seen the situation as it is. The author lays no claim whatsoever to greater zeal or superior discernment, but now, as then, by the same Spirit every member of the body has his own special gift, and through conditions which he believes to be entirely providential he has come, in the gradual evolutions of his experience as a pastor, to the views herein held. In his clear vision of the Church's opportunity and the pastor's responsible relationship to it he finds his call, as from

above, to offer this earnest, if humble, plea to his less enthusiastic—though, he believes, not less devoted—brethren in the ministry, a plea in behalf of their own increased efficiency and the Church's larger usefulness.

Some will think that, in his excess of zeal, the author has put the case too strongly, and, distrustful of his own enthusiasm, he has been careful to sift again and again the statements that might seem immoderate. The sieve of second thought finds no reason to modify even these. He believes all the more confidently that he is "clothed and in his right mind," and has spoken forth only the words of truth and soberness.

Some will say that we have had successful young people's societies in the Church all along, and why this great hue and cry about the Epworth League, as if it were an idea never dreamed of before? Maybe so; a few—a very few, compared with the whole number of Epworth Leagues in existence now—and of these, the best were not at all comparable in organization and efficiency to a model, up to date League. A third-rate suburban church will do more with its young people to-day than the strong metropolitan church five years ago.

Others, it may be loyal leaguers, will say that the pastor's relation to the League has been unduly magnified. To be sure, when there are local unions, con-

ferences, and connectional helps accessible, in a very vigorous church, a League might begin and go on successfully without much help from the pastor; but even then, without the pastor to encourage, guide, and keep it in touch with other branches of Church work, it could not come to the highest degree of prosperity. I say it *might* begin and go on; I never saw one that actually did, and, from what I am constantly seeing to the contrary, I am convinced that it is next thing to impossible to make the League go at all without the pastor's enthusiastic, intelligent, and most persistent interest.

The views maintained here are not new—novelty is not the important thing—they have, however, besides the merit of being true, the added excellence of being tried. The author knows that they are true, because he has tried and found them so.

This long preface to a short book will save the bother of explanation farther on.

E. H. RAWLINGS.

Norfolk, Va., January, 1896.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Epworth League is an old idea in a new form. The idea is the religious development of the young, and it is as old as the Church. But old truths are ever assuming new forms in the course of human progress; and so this great idea is embodied now in a complete system of work—simple in its organization, but effective in its methods—known as the Epworth League.

The time is past to discuss whether we need and will have the League or not. It is here to stay, and has already accomplished wonderful results, and vindicated the wisdom of its adoption as a part of the organic economy of the Methodist Church. It would be just as reasonable to argue against the Sunday school as against the Epworth League. They are both integral parts of our ecclesiastical system, and we can neither oppose nor neglect them without disloyalty to the Church. But, like all new things, the Epworth League needs to be understood and adjusted to the established order of the Church. Problems arise that it requires wisdom to solve. And many of these problems are connected with the relation of the pastor to the League and of the League to the pastor. Some of these problems are delicate, and the success of the work depends largely on their right solution.

I take pleasure in commanding to all our pastors and Leagues this little book as an earnest contribu-

tion to the literature of this cause. Its author is himself a pastor, young in years, yet with considerable experience in the ministry. He knows the place of the League, and writes from personal experience on the important topics discussed in this little volume. His pen is keen and bold and strong, like the thought it traces. His little book was not written because the author wanted to write a book, but because there is need for just such an earnest discussion of the subject as he gives us. When you have read it, I think that you will join us in saying to its gifted author; "One good turn deserves another; give us another."

S. A. STEEL.

THE PASTOR AND THE LEAGUE.

CHAPTER I.

THE LEAGUE.

"Our new building," and some say our best. A Methodist layman, an enthusiast whose one idea is usually the Sunday school, after observing very carefully the fine work of the League in his own Church, and attending the great Conference in Chattanooga, forgot himself one day, and let slip the confession: "It is the biggest thing in Methodism."

Now comparisons as to value, in these organizations of the Church, are unnecessary and, indeed, impossible. How would you properly compare the worth of the League with that of the Sunday school? Nothing could be more important than the Sunday school, that has done a most remarkable work, from the beginning and on through a most glorious history; and nothing could have taken its place. How would you compare the League with the cause of Missions?

Nothing could be more important than Missions, since nothing, surely, lies nearer the heart of the Son of God than the great work of evangelizing the world.

The work of the League lies in an entirely different field from these, and a field peculiarly its own. I was discussing the purpose and work of the Epworth League with an intelligent layman sometime since, when he asked me to frame for him a definition, and particularly as to how its work is related to that of the Sunday school. In reply, a number of scattering ideas at and about the special point were advanced, and from these his methodical mind gleaned and compacted the following, or very similar, definition: The Sunday school is a training school in Christian doctrine, while the Epworth League is a training school in Christian experience. I was pleased at once with the distinction, though I felt that it needed, perhaps, some qualification. I thought of it afterwards, and liked it better still. Was he very far from an accurate as well as striking definition, if experience be taken not in its special, but broader and more objective, sense of practice or exercise?

In the Sunday school the child gets the truth, while in the League that truth takes fire and becomes active. The devotional meeting fosters the soul life, or experience proper, and gives opportunity for its natural expression in testimony, and other forms of participation in the public services. The Charity and Help work gives opportunity for exercise still broader, while the Literary Department, by bringing culture to religion, gives us a Christian culture, and that strong loyalty to duty and privilege, inseparable usually from culture, and so essential always as an element of stability and permanency in the life of the Church.

The Epworth League, we should say, is a muster field for the massing and drilling of raw recruits, a religious gymnasium in which young Christians, bringing spiritual muscle and limb, exercise to become brave, agile, and strong. The Sunday school has its proper work in the Church, the cause of Missions has, certainly, its place, and the Epworth League its, each in its own particular sphere.

The League, however, does possess a peculiar value; a sort of value attaching to the Sunday school a hundred years ago. The

Sunday school is now established; its utility is well known, and its future assured. In its work no crisis appears, either at hand or remote. It is a dead level drive with the Sunday school, or rather the incline of a gradually increasing success and glory all the way to the millennium. As for Missions—well, the crisis is perpetual here, and nothing could take precedence, whatever special quality it may carry. Anyway, the League is in its inception, and so its situation, by its very novelty, is critical.

A need was felt in our Church, as in other branches of the Christian Church. Evolutions of Church life, in all evangelical denominations, had been going on in this direction. Witness the spontaneous and almost simultaneous rise of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, the Epworth League, and the Baptist Young People's Union, in Congregational, Methodist, and Baptist Churches, respectively.

The need seems to have been peculiarly felt in the Methodist Church. The class meeting was gone, or was no longer sufficiently influential to be of service. Let us lament its going as we might, we had to recognize that

this venerable and once valuable institution had outlived its adaptation, and so its usefulness. It is certain that the class meeting had lost its hold upon the young people of the Church, and therefore could not do for them the noble work of training in Christian life and experience which it once did. Something was needed, badly needed, and needed at once. Here is any amount of latent material, unused knowledge; here a most distressing hiatus between the Sunday school and adult membership. The breach is getting wider and wider, and more and more difficult to manage. At this point the need, long vaguely felt, had yet hardly distinctly voiced itself; we had scarcely laid our finger with certainty upon the particular point of weakness, when the providential supply came in the form of the Epworth League. Can any one who knows its phenomenal history doubt for one moment that it is all providential? Here is a niche in Church life which the League exactly fills, and nothing else can; and we wonder now that it could have remained so long unfilled.

So great the need then, so fully met, so suddenly, so effectually, if interest is concentrated, so important is it that we concentrate

at once, that it is not wonderful that we hear on all sides: "It is our biggest and best." Considering, in addition to its undoubted intrinsic value, the peculiar importance attaching to it from the inevitable crisis attending a full inauguration of so great a movement in the Church, is not the Epworth League, Missions always excepted, "the biggest thing we have"?

CHAPTER II.

THE LEAGUE AND THE PASTOR.

With that much regarding its general purpose and work, we are ready to ask now: Does the pastor sustain a peculiar relationship to the Epworth League?

If he is of the right kind, he sustains a peculiar relationship to every department of the Church: the official board, the ladies' and juvenile societies, and all the organizations that enter into its elaborate and complicated machinery. To none of these, certainly, does he stand more closely related than to the League. I am so far safe, and would not suffer enthusiasm to color the picture too highly. I have thought that the importance of the pastor to the success of the League may have been exaggerated in the mind of the writer. He is a pastor himself, and naturally regards the League, as other things, from the pastor's point of view. But in sober second thought, he is convinced that the pastor really has an importance here that can scarcely be exagger-

ated. I have observed in practical League talks how often the pastor is referred to ; how often commended if faithful and efficient, and exhorted if remiss, and how naturally every department is looked at from his point of view.

And this fact is even more conclusive. As far as my observation goes, the successful League is always that in which the pastor is enthusiastic, while those that have operated without his sympathy and help, as many have attempted to do, have had a nominal, unsatisfactory, and, usually, short-lived existence. I do not recall a solitary exception. There may be and I think there are a few, though I have not seen them. Surely this could hardly be a matter of coincidence.

That the pastor's interest should be so essential to the prosperity of the League is entirely natural and, indeed, necessary. His office, apart from any extraordinary personality, gives him a peculiar place in its work. There may be others in the League as earnest as he, as wise, as fertile in resources ; but he is pastor, and that fact gives him an influence that none other can have, and especially with the young people of the Church. No one can unite different classes and ages for a common

aim and a common work as well as the pastor. No one can inspire confidence and enthusiasm as he. Surely of all possible combinations, none is so significant in matters that mediate success in its work as the League and the pastor.

CHAPTER III.

THE PASTOR AND HIS OBLIGATION.

Let us take the time now to write down this word OBLIGATION, and read it in capitals. Many pastors have not done so. They get this idea of the League: Here is another society, not different in character and availability from a score or more already in operation. They hear a great deal about the League in the Church and in the papers. Well, it will please the young people, and maybe keep them out of mischief. Anyway they desire it, and it is safer, maybe less trouble, to let them have it. It is a matter of expediency purely, and not at all of obligation and conscience.

Such an attitude toward the League comes, and can only come, of failure to recognize its place and importance in the life of the Church. If the future intelligence and future efficiency of the Church membership, to say nothing of the present, are to depend upon the work of the League, as is undoubtedly true, can the

successful operation of the League be to the pastor a matter of indifference or simple choice, of no obligation or little obligation?

From what has been said it clearly appears that no one is so essential to the prosperity of the League as the pastor. Suppose that by opposition or indifference he fails to do what he can to make it succeed. He does his Church a great injury. He not only does not help, but hinders, since his young people are sure to catch the contagion of his indifference. Nay, indeed, he literally blocks the way of progress. His personality will have much to do with success, but his position scarcely less. He is pastor of the Church for years. He not only does not take hold and lead or urge on to the work, but fills the position in which another, recognizing his obligation, not only would not trammel by his apathy, but would help by leading his Church into the line of progress. So that by the indifference of one man, in our polity, a Church might find herself four or five years behind her times.

Now I know that the pastor who has not seen the importance of the League will say that this is only another case of "much cry and

little wool," and laughs in his sleeve at the unnecessary heat of the extremest who makes such unreasonable "ado about nothing." It is not the heat of the extremest, as the skeptic will come to see, unless he be totally and hopelessly blinded. The attitude of pastors is already changing. Once there were some who were indifferent, opposed, and did not hesitate to discount and openly sneer at the Epworth League. With great interest and gratification I have observed the rapidly changing signs. The indifferent become suddenly enthusiastic, and the opposed interested, or, at least, seem quieting for the vault, so that few have the hardihood now to risk so much as a slur.

Let no pastor suppose that he can afford to be indifferent. It does not take either a statesman or a seer to make this certain forecast. The Church is going forward, and upon this very line of progress. The young people's work will be the movement of the Church in this era. You cannot stop it, the tide is too strong for stemming; and the pastor that does not go with it will inevitably go under it—and he ought to. I do not speak rashly, but in the confidence of the calmest and most

thoughtful conviction. The time is near at hand, if not already upon us, when the pastor that neglects the League, and by his neglect suffers it to fail of prosperity, will be held to condign account in the matter of his opportunity. If he insists on keeping his eyes shut, and persists in blocking the Church's progress, she will nevertheless open her eyes to the imposition, and when she does she will call another to his place, and relegate him to the rear that yields no opportunity to obstruction.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PASTOR AND HIS OPPORTUNITY.

The previous chapter was meant mainly to prepare the way for this. I wish that we could get away from our consciences, or certainly from the necessity of depending on them. But even the preacher who talks so much about Christian liberty requires an occasional pinching and prodding from that acrid quarter. But there is a more excellent way, certainly a more cheering aspect of the League from the pastor's point of view.

When the true pastor comes really to appreciate the need of the Church, and the League's wonderful adaptation to that need, he will not wait to see the obligation of the situation. He looks no longer at conscience, that presses from the rearward, but at the pleasing prospect which invites from before. Like an inspiring revelation the magnificent sweep of opportunity breaks upon him, and at once he parts company with obligation, because after that he can afford to.

How often, when the busy pastor thinks of organizing a League, does he feel, "Well, what is the use of it anyway? We have abundant societies already, and why another?" He will have to operate this, affording skill and motive power just as he has to do for all the others. He is dismayed at the very thought of "another society."

Well, many Leagues are of that kind; with poor organization, low vitality, slow, ramshackle movement, or none at all. They exhaust more energy far than they generate. That is not the kind I have in mind: not a puny, sickly thing; but robust, healthy, active; can stand alone, walk alone, work alone. If the pastor has a League like that, he does not feel the burden of it; the burden changes to buoyancy. The work he puts in here is caught up by a hundred workers, and by them multiplied a hundredfold.

• The sympathetic, diligent pastor of a large congregation often wishes, what he rarely gets, an assistant pastor. There are so many things an assistant could do that never are done. Now an assistant pastor could render scarcely a tithe of the real help a thoroughly efficient League does. A company of young

people from the League visited an aged lady of another Church upon invitation, and held a prayer meeting. She was delighted, and declared that, in all her history, her own Church had done her no such kindness. She was disposed to blame the pastor for what she felt was neglect. But he was not to blame. He had a large Church, and could not possibly give her the attention she needed, and would get if her Church were properly organized and at work.

A pastor looked over his Church register, to make a study of it before beginning a pastoral round, and as individual case after individual case needing immediate attention came before him he found himself well-nigh overwhelmed with the thought that there was so much to be done, and only himself to do it. It simply cannot be done. What pastor has not felt and said that? He did not. He had an Epworth League, and used it. He called together the Chairmen of committees, and in an extended conference assigned them much of the work which would otherwise have fallen to him, and which, while he could never have done it on account of its magnitude, would yet have hung constantly over him, taking

much of his time, and all his peace of mind. They did as directed, saving the time and preventing the worry.

The Epworth League, properly employed, becomes the pastor's light infantry corps, readily mobilized and easily handled; his skirmish line for reconnoitering and partisan warfare; more, his Old Guard, his Tenth Legion, that, always reliable, are admirably adapted for quick, dexterous, dashing, well-girt movements against the enemy.

When a young man at Conference reported "No League," a thoughtful layman shook his head significantly, and said, "Back number." No, he is not yet a "back number." He is a bright, earnest, useful fellow who will soon see his opportunity, and, when he does, can be relied upon to wheel at once into line. It is certain, however, that his eyes have never yet been opened to the greatest of all opportunities, in tangible, intelligent, aggressive work for his Church, or for himself, that his Church ever offered him.

CHAPTER V.

THE PASTOR AND SUCCESS.

Possibly some one who has not tried it will say : "All that is very much more easily written than done. It is a fine theory if you can work it, but there's the rub. Given a League of the sort described, and really prosperous, you have one of the most useful of organizations. But can you have one like that?" He sees in Churches all over the Connection "corpses" and "skeletons" of Leagues that once were. He sees other feeble little societies that give a great deal more worry than service ; like delicate, diseased little flowers that, instead of cheering with their fragrance, depress and sicken with their pallor. Maybe he has had experience of it himself. He organized a League, and while the enthusiasm lasted it did pretty fair work. But after a little the reaction set in; its life ran gradually lower and lower, till it finally died of heart failure—from sheer lack of vitality.

This is why so many pastors hesitate. They

have seen failure after failure, till they have come to feel that failure is always probable, and often inevitable. Will it succeed? I answer unhesitatingly that it will. I have been connected with several Leagues. In no case were the circumstances especially favorable. The people were not different from other people, only they had the mind and will to work, and there was not one of them that failed, or did not come to a most robust and useful life. Of course some opportunities are better than others. There is better opportunity in a large Church than in a small one, in an intelligent Church than an illiterate one, in a spiritual Church than in a worldly one, in the city than in the country.

Just a word here about work in the country. We have wondered if it were advisable to organize on the circuits. For one, I am no longer in doubt. Sometime since I asked a leading member of a strong country Church why they had no League, and his reply was that the people could not be gotten together in the country often enough. I was not certain. Some fifteen miles from that place I was in a community in which were many children without the advantages of a Sunday

school. I asked a Christian lady why they did not organize a Sunday school, and she said that there was no one to take charge of it. They had had a school once in the public schoolhouse; and actually it often happened that a man who was not a professing Christian had to open, reading the scripture, offering prayer, and conducting all the exercises; and that, too, notwithstanding the fact that there were very many professing Christians in the neighborhood. "Ah," thought I, "this is not different from thousands of country communities. There are many professing Christians, but the smallest number of workers. What do they need? What but the Epworth League to train the young people to do the work that so sadly needs doing." I felt that when the need was so great, surely, in the orderings of Providence, the supply would not be impossible, or even very difficult, and so, *a priori*, the League ought to succeed, and it will.

Now for the sequel. Not ten miles from that point, in one of the most illiterate sections of the country, in one of the newest and weakest Churches, of the very weakest denomination, was a Young People's Society

of Christian Endeavor, organized and at work, and upon inquiry I found that perhaps the best and most hopeful Christian work in the community was being done by that faithful band of young people who had a mind even in the country to make the society succeed, and did it.

Why there is no sort of peradventure, and we ought not to start out with the thought that there is. In the future there are some things which we can predict with almost absolute certainty. We carry the efficiency within ourselves. The success of the Epworth League is one of those things. Will it succeed? No, of course not. How can it succeed—itself? Machinery will not run itself, however costly and however perfect. There must be somewhere in contact with it energy, heart, mind. Will it succeed? That is not the question. This is the form: Will we make it succeed?

The pastor can do more to answer that question affirmatively than any other. No one else has his position, none his influence, none his opportunity; and so no one is as much answerable for success as he. Let us examine several elements that he will find most essen-

tial to, and most available in, his efforts to help his League to an active and prosperous life.

I. COMMON SENSE.

Of all our Lord's divine-human furnishing for his life on earth, I believe he found scarcely anything more serviceable than his common sense. Common sense! the power to see things—not great things; little, but no less important things—to see them not as they ought to be, but as they are; and in the premises to do not always a popular thing, not often an heroic thing, but always the very best thing that could have been done under the circumstances. •Common sense! but, in proportion to need and availability, the most uncommon thing in all the wide world.

The pastor needs it always, as he needs nothing else except religion, but nowhere will he find it more necessary and serviceable than when touching the League. Common sense in conning a situation, in seeing and seizing upon the really important elements, in leading and inspiring the young people, in anticipating difficulties and reactions, in persistently, patiently, pursuing the purpose set, and the practical plans that look toward its accomplishment!

2. ENTHUSIASM.

This is the enthusiastic age of the world's history. We have been reminded of that fact a thousand or so times already, but one more will not be too many, if we mean to accomplish anything worthy the name. Everything moves with a rush and a jerk to-day. Positively, we live so fast now that we travel as far, hear and see as much, learn as much, and accomplish as much, in a single decade, as in the whole three-score and ten of our earthly allotment, a hundred years ago.

Now enthusiasm is as legitimate in religion as elsewhere, and as essential. It is not new here. Christ was mad, they thought, and Paul was beside himself. The apostle did not deny the charge, but said that it was for their souls' sake, and out of the constraining love of his Lord.

Especially is enthusiasm necessary in League work. Here are young people with any amount of warm blood, only waiting to be stirred. They may have good heads, but have not begun to use them yet. It is heart with them, and that goes by impulse. Enthusiasm begets enthusiasm, and the enthusiastic pastor, as none other, will arouse the

enthusiasm—the interest, confidence, and energy—of the young people of the Church.

3. TENACITY.

Perhaps I ought to put on the prefix for emphasis, and say *pertinacity*. The holding on has in it an element of obstinacy. The kind of enthusiasm we want is intelligent enthusiasm; none other will answer. It is easy enough to move the feelings of young people. What element is more volatile than the blood of youth? You can get them to join the League, and come as long as the enthusiasm lasts; but as they came in with the tide, so, as the tide sets back, they will go out with it. And the higher the tide at the flooding, the harder to stem in the ebbing.

Here is found the crucial test. The pastor's enthusiasm needs the staying and sticking quality, his grip must have the steel; or his hold breaks, and the catastrophe is on. Let him not forget, he made up his mind in the beginning, not to try it, but to do it; not that it might succeed, but that it would succeed, it *must*. There is no more reason why it should fail now than existed then. No reaction should be allowed to discourage or sur-

prise. When the ebb starts, if he has properly calculated and planned, and really has the steel, he holds on. While others are yielding to panic and deserting, he is calm, still confident, still working, and the whole Church indifferent or opposed could hardly beat him back.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PASTOR AND HIS HOBBY.

It seems a pity to arrest the rising tide, even for a moment's caution. But it is necessary at this point. The pastor that sees his opportunity in the League, and the work really prospering, as he believed it would, is liable to become so enthusiastic as to magnify this department of work at the expense of others. There is danger of making it his hobby. •

Now hobby riders are often the men that move the world—they just as often move the world's disgust and bile. The preacher ought to be broader than that. Let him glow over the League, but why, in his ardor, neglect the Sunday school, Missions, and many other integral and important departments of the Church's work? Maybe he is a specialist, he is better in one line of work than another: he should be good at all, or at least try to be. Other departments need his interest, and languish without it.

Again, and especially, his partiality for one class of work, and one class of members, will arouse jealousies and antagonisms. Men will say that he gives all his time to the young people, and cares nothing for the old. Elderly people are very sensitive. We often think that they are old enough, and have seen enough of Christian life, to take care of themselves, without so much attention from the pastor. But they love the pastor, appreciate his attention and sympathy, and really require it scarcely less than the young. If the pastor is to be a specialist, let him never allow himself to pursue his specialty to narrowness — ride his hobby *ad nauseam*.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PASTOR AND ORGANIZATION.

He will ask what is the best way to go about organizing. This question is especially important now when there are so many Churches without the League, and so many being won over to the idea of having it.

Organization starts with the pastor, or ought to. He gets all the helps available in the way of constitution and by-laws and tracts, as there are several that give suggestions about organization. He ought to do that, if he does not.

There is nothing more important than an intelligent and thorough organization, and I want especially to emphasize that. From a poor organization the League often never recovers. Under the burden of it, it struggles along till, in some cases, it dies, and must start again; and lives, if it lives at all, by a process of resurrection, a most difficult process always. I mentioned "corpses" and "skeletons." There are many of these all

through the Church, and such a pity it is! For the League it is far better not to have lived at all, than to live and die. When you are troubled with the defunct remains of a society like that, it is most difficult to re-organize. The young people have lost confidence, and shy at the very mention of the name.

It is no easy or very simple matter to organize a League if it is properly done. The pastor calls together a mass meeting for organization. Well, they have heard a great deal about the League. It is a new thing, and, as most people are Athenians on new things, he has a crowd. Nobody in particular knows anything in particular. But somebody looks at the constitution and by-laws, and states that there must be so many departments, and so many, and such officers. The departments are provided, the officers are elected, and great enthusiasm prevails. Many join, both young and old, and there is your organization. It is not wonderful that, in a little while, you have a regular bedlam of confusion. Demoralization succeeds, reaction, discouragement, indifference, disorganization —death.

It takes time to get a League started. Let no one suppose that the first thing to do is to call a meeting, and go into formal organization. Sometimes the pastor's enthusiasm runs riot with his judgment; he does that, and must pay the penalty. It takes time to arouse enthusiasm, if that enthusiasm is to be intelligent.

I know a pastor that, having decided to have a League, did scarcely anything but talk it for a month. He presented it "publicly, and from house to house." He kept that up until his people became impatient, and clamored for organization. No; they were not ready yet. He knew the special difficulties and special needs, and was providing for them at the outset.

Let the pastor bear especially in mind that numbers are not a very important *desideratum*. Of course the purpose of the League is to bring in and train as many as possible, but I mean as regards success. *It is not numbers that make success.* It is true here, as elsewhere in Christian work, it is not the hundreds and fifties, but the twos and ones, that are really important. Personality is the particular thing to depend on and to look out for. Every pas-

tor will feel that while he is developing much beyond this, still the life and prosperity of the League, certainly in the early part of its history, will depend upon the interest and work of a half dozen, sometimes, indeed, upon one or two young people of striking personality and more than ordinary influence.

Young people are like sheep, and a few must wear the bell. It is the bell-sheep idea—if you will allow the homely but suggestive expression—that will often, perhaps oftener than any other, solve the difficult problem of success. With all his advantages of position and influence, the pastor would hardly win success without some such as these. What he needs to do, when he has informed himself as to the nature of the work, is to single out a few from among his young people, those with most religion and, by their religion and individuality, with most influence, and work through these. Get them to know what the League is, and what it is in detail. Get them to believe in its utility and its practicability. See that these have the confidence and enthusiasm which he has, and he need not fear for the rest.

I was pastor of a Church whose interest in every department had greatly declined. I saw that what was needed was the infusion of new life; warm, buoyant, fresh life. What better thing could we have than the Epworth League? I found some prejudice against it in different quarters that gave special difficulty. In the congregation, however, was a young man of great common sense, as well as great piety and zeal. I knew his influence, and was certain that if I could win him and impress him with the importance of the League its prosperity was assured; otherwise not so. I asked him to come to the parsonage for a talk. It was a busy evening in other matters, but I knew that the crisis had come, and that now was my opportunity. We talked it about two hours and a half, and when he was leaving I said: "Do you believe in the League?" He answered: "I do." "Will it do good?" "It will." "Will it succeed here?" "I think so." "Are you enthusiastic?" "I am." The League began. It was the life of the Church, and that young man, as I expected, was the life of the League, and from that time there was never a moment's uncertainty about its success and value.

I am sure that nothing is more important than the influence of certain striking and strong personalities; and in the organization, upon which so much depends, the pastor will find nothing more important than the discovering and bringing out of these.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PASTOR AND AUTHORITY.

I want to offer here another word of caution. We have seen the pastor's relation to the League, and his responsibility growing out of that relationship. If now he rightly appreciates the situation, he will recognize his opportunity, and, in the best sense, magnify his office. Let him be very careful that he does not exaggerate its authority. Woe betide the day and the League when the pastor comes to think that he must "run it."

Of course, in our polity it is well enough understood that the pastor's authority in the Church is supreme. It is true of Church organizations, and the League is no exception. Prerogative is his ; let him use, only let him not abuse it. There is no danger that he will not have all the authority he is entitled to. His office starts him ahead of all the rest ; he is pastor. Then, as he is usually a man of some personality, or ought to be, his personality adds much. Methodist people are not

given to insubordination. The military idea running through our system of itinerancy trains to subjection. Young people especially are accustomed not to control, but to be controlled; not to exercise, but to regard and reverence authority, particularly if it be pastoral. From the time they call him "uncle," and on, outside the home, and perhaps without any exception, nobody is quite so good or wise, none to be quite so much revered as the pastor. Young people are more than disposed to do what the pastor suggests.

Authority is his, then. He is not only entitled to it, but it is actually in his hands. Let him recognize and use only, not stickle for the form of it. It is a new, beautiful, up to date machine—the Epworth League. His skill and energy are much needed to operate it. He will study the wheels and bands, therefore, to know it perfectly; he will keep his eye on it, he will keep his hand on every part; only let it be a skillful, soft, unseen hand.

The pastor often makes a most fatal mistake in allowing the disposition to rule to characterize his work throughout. It is largely

a matter of habit with him. In the smaller Churches, during his earlier pastorates, he divided his authority with no one, as he divided nothing else, till now, doing about all the work, and exercising all the authority. So undisputed has been his sway, so easy and natural has it been for him to direct and control things, so long as he done it, that it has become second nature for him to lord it over God's heritage. If unresisted, he becomes a tyrant without ever suspecting it; and if resisted, as he often is in the larger Churches and ought to be, he clashes with those who, if properly handled, would be his best helpers, repels them, forestalls his own opportunity, and maybe has to seek another field. The account he gives of such a Church is that they are a disloyal, insubordinate set, when as a matter of fact they were simply doing what ought to have been done for him long before: making a reasonable resistance to unreasonable tyranny.

A pastor getting out of humor and sulking about his little brief authority is a spectacle most ludicrous to me, if it were not so deplorable. He is servant of all; and that means not sovereignty, but service. If he is of the

right kind, he wants the work done ; and the way he can best accomplish that is the way he likes best, and lets prerogative go to the winds. Other things being equal, he ought to have more influence than any other ; and he has it. There is no question about that. But why dwarf the best life of the Church by throttling and absolutely repressing all spirit of independence.

He will give his enthusiasm, his common sense, his counsel, his work ; but why suppose that the officers he proposes must be elected just because he proposes them, and his opinions adopted solely because they are his opinions ? He will let this young people know that they are to have opinions of their own ; and, if better than his, he is ready any moment to yield his. It is thus that they will come to respect his wishes, and be most disposed to do as he desires.

It is not at all my purpose to encourage insubordination. I have no patience with any species of insubjection, from a bishop down. I have no sympathy with the sentiment very rarely expressed, "As between the Church and the League, I am with the League." There can be no such issue as that. If there

can be, when it comes, and comes to be general, I for one will be for relegating the League to a most summary decease, and one so effectual as to be absolutely beyond the hope of resurrection.

Between the League and the Church ! The League is the Church. It does the work of the Church, and above all things, as says the constitution, fosters loyalty: loyalty to the history of the Church, to its institutions, to its officers. I would not utter one word to lessen that loyalty, but would increase and strengthen it by every means possible; and I believe that the highest form of loyalty is that which easily consists with, and is, indeed, the outgrowth of an intelligent, manly self-reliance.

This is the layman's age. He has found himself; the Church has found him. Nothing perhaps is so important as to bring him to a full consciousness of his place and power. It is not more important to foster his loyalty than to find and bring to strong, sturdy development his Christian manhood. Let the pastor see to it that, as among the most important things he would do for his Church, at this period of formation, he will train his

young people to habits of self-reliance, and that by no silly stickling for authority on his part shall that important purpose fail of accomplishment.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PASTOR AND WORK.

What was said about the spirit of independence suggests some thoughts as to the pastor's part in the work of the League.

Let us recall the definitions of the League. When you get the gist of them, you will have very nearly this: The Epworth League is an organization that trains for work. Here is the need of the kingdom to-day, as it always has been, of all denominations, in every Church, from the feeblest country chapel to the strongest metropolitan temple. They all need workers.

In our Church, while the class meeting lasted, the young people were trained to a certain sort of religious activity; but after that lost its hold, excepting the ladies' societies, organized usually for the more temporal and secular parts of the Church's work, there has been scarcely any training agency. There was an occasional revival of such pervasive and general sweep as to give a young Chris-

tian an impulse, under the glow of his first love or renewed love, that put him to work, and kept him at it. But till the Epworth League came the serious problem of the pastor was how he should get his people to work, and especially at that time of life when it is easiest, if not easy to begin, and when, from the pliancy and tactility of youth, they will acquire a facility for work that they can never afterwards.

I recur to the case mentioned above, of the community in which there was no Sunday school because there was nobody to conduct it, though there were many professing Christians. This, I said, was one of thousands. There is nobody to do the work, and it is the hardest thing to get anybody to do it.

I have had good men to beg me not to call on them to pray in a Wednesday night service, and threaten not to come unless I gave them my word of honor that I would not. Sometimes a man who has been a Christian forty years will sit through a prayer meeting talk in mortal terror if he has any suspicion that he may be called on to lead in prayer at the conclusion of the talk. This is true of all sorts of Christian work; leading meetings, offering public

prayer, talking to the unsaved, visiting the poor and the sick. And it is true not only of worldly Christians and those afar off, but of many very good men. Why is it? This little experience in athletics will very strikingly illustrate. When I became a student in the university I found that I would be required to exercise in the gymnasium three times each week. Strangely, when in college I had not cared for athletics, and took my exercise in sawing wood or walking down the railroad track, mainly and preferably the latter, and so exercise in the gymnasium became the greatest drudge for me from the beginning. Right manfully did I work away for awhile at the clubs and bells, bars and trapezes, but found that it was unavailing. Whenever I was put up with a class on exhibition I missed the swing or figure, and disgraced the whole business. The director finally rid himself of the scandal of my awkwardness by putting me under the galleries, where the spectators could not see me. I never got beyond the windmill with the clubs, or skinning the cat with the ropes. The dog was already too old to learn new tricks. Finally, in great disgrace and greater disgust, I got a special dispensation

from the Chancellor of the university and the dean of my department to resign the gymnasium, and I gave it up.

It is as true in religion as it is in athletics. If you want to acquire skill and ease in spiritual exercises, begin early, when the bones are flexible and the muscles soft. You take a young man and put him to work, and he is not so careful about his dignity or appearance. He is not so easily embarrassed ; or if he is, the embarrassment is by no means so trying.

“Why not talk?” I asked a Christian some time adult. “Because I would do so poorly.” “Well, why not say some little thing that a child could say without tangling and tripping?” “Pshaw!” he replied, “I want to say something worth hearing.” That is just it. He wants to run before he walks or crawls. Now men forty years old are not in the habit of crawling at anything, and find that exercise extremely mortifying. So awkward and difficult is it that when a man has lived to be thirty or forty years old as a Christian, and never become a worker, it is probable, by the largest odds, that he never will. All this explains why it is that, while there

is so much to do, there is so little done, and what is done is scarcely better than half done.

And yet there is much latent material, much good will, and some real piety. How shall the supply be brought to the need? It is certain that there is to be some careful manipulation, some very faithful mediation. The pastor is to be mediator between the work and the workers.

If the League is a workers' training school (and it is), then manifestly it is not so much what work is done, though that is important, but how many are engaged in the doing, and by doing get strength and skill to do more. Let the pastor recognize this important fact, and see his relation to it. The League has done its best work when it has set the largest number to doing something. The pastor's business, then, at this point, *is not to do the work of the League, but to get the League to work.*

It is as true as the gospel is true, as Mr. Moody puts it, that it is better to put ten men to work than to do the work of ten. That is so well understood that it is hardly necessary to say why. In the first case, only the work is done, and that ends it; in the other, not only

is the work done, but ten men are taught to work, and will keep at it. It is just the difference between arithmetical and geometrical progression.

There are two ways of working which I have observed among pastors. In the first the pastor is diligent and earnest. He is all the time at work, and does his work most excellently. By the force of his extraordinary personality he gets his Church *en masse* into many things. He, however, does not organize his people and train them into discriminating, persistent habits of activity. They are simply moved by, and finally—absorbed into his personality. He is a strong pastor and much sought after. Nobody has such enthusiastic pastorate as he while he is with them. But when he leaves, observe the reaction. See how the preacher that follows must struggle against the ebbing tide. The best he can do often is to stay the tide, and sometimes he is not able to do that, but goes under, as do many of the Church's best interests.

The explanation is that the training has been defective; there has been no training at all. All his methods of work have tended to develop in them a spirit of helplessness, and

made him more and more essential to their prosperity. They have leaned on him until they find themselves absolutely incapable of working or walking alone. He has done a big work, maybe; but has done his Church incalculable injury, although himself the last and least of all suspected as the cause of the injury. The man that is so unfortunate as to follow him gets the blame of the reaction that is most sure to follow an enthusiastic, but extremely unwise, pastorate like that.

Now the other pastor works as faithfully as this, and as constantly, not omitting to do much personal work, knowing that the only way to learn the best methods is by doing the best work.

But he works intelligently and wisely. He has in mind future as well as present prosperity. Above all things, his Church must be put beyond the control of all fortuitous circumstances. How can he do his best work among his people, and at the same time not render them dependent upon his particular methods, and so expose them to demoralization, when he must sometime, with all his itinerant race, fold his tent like the Arab and silently go somewhere else? By seeing to

nothing more studiously than that they shall be trained to rely upon themselves, trained therefore to think for themselves, plan for themselves, to know how to do, and to do, the kind of work which will always be at their hands.

John the Baptist was the true type. "He must increase; I, decrease;" absolutely no feeling of jealousy. It was his joy that his Master should continue to grow greater when he was gone.

And that is the feeling of every true pastor. How far beneath the spirit of this greatest of prophets is the pastor who can with complacency contemplate the probability that, when he is gone, his Church will sorely suffer for his absence. He may have done a good work, I say, but not a wise one; and for the fact that the Church does suffer for his going, though he little suspect it, he is himself alone answerable.

CHAPTER X.

THE PASTOR AND DETAIL.

I regard this subject important enough for a special chapter.

There is something more than epigram in the definition: Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains. There is truth.

We are about agreed that Napoleon was, all things considered, the greatest genius the world ever saw. Attention to detail was confessedly a large, if not the larger, part of his genius. He thought no matter of the campaign unworthy of his personal attention. The position of the enemy, their number and strength, the roads, the condition of the commands and companies, and even the men, with their individual characteristics and merits, were all the objects of his most careful study.

And this is the genius of the great pastor. A man may preach eloquent sermons, may love his people, visit and sympathize with them, be called a great preacher and an excellent pastor, and still, somehow, his work

does not prosper. It is disappointing to him and to others, going always by a halting, hobbling pace, that he thinks utterly unaccountable.

It is not unaccountable. In nine cases out of ten this will be found the explanation. He has not given himself to the drudgery of detail. He sees things *en masse*, gets a general view of the whole, but is so carried away with the bulk as to be totally unconscious of, and indifferent to, minutiae.

No, the man that sees only in perspective sees only vaguely and partially. The work is mainly done in little matters, and little matters are overlooked in any general or distant view. It is not wonderful that many things come up along the way to be done, that have not been provided for, many reactions not anticipated ; and so he is committed to a policy that dooms him to perpetual disappointment and frequent panic.

How essential this, in the pastor's work for the League. In organization nothing is more important, and hence I have emphasized the fact that it takes some time and much thought to organize with effect. Let them clamor for organization. Does he know the ground?

Let him hold the reins on his own enthusiasm till he does. He must go ahead and study his young people, know their strength and weakness. If he has done his duty, he is prepared for emergencies, and is never taken by surprise. Not a reaction arises that he has not already anticipated and provided against.

He must know the machine if he hopes to operate it with skill and energy. It is not beneath him to be familiar with the constitution and by-laws. From careful study of the genius of the League, he should get in mind, and keep clearly before him, its purpose. If he would keep his hand on every part, as he should, he must know it through and through.

He should know the work in detail. Young people are willing to work, and it is a mistake to suppose that they are not, as we often do. They hesitate simply because, in our habits of dealing with these things, we have regarded Christian activity as so complicated and so transcendent. Tell them in a most eloquent sermon that they must work, and they will not hear. They think it is too high, they cannot attain unto it. Tell one in private conversation that he can do something, put the finger upon that something, show him how to do it to the

minutest particular, and he takes an entirely different view of it.

The pastor must know his own ground therefore; study his register, his congregation, community, even more carefully than if he had the work to do himself. Let him allot the work in easy, simple, and detailed form, and they will do it gladly and well.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PASTOR AND COMMITTEES.

The League is divided into departments, with each in charge of a special committee, one of the most important features of the organization. Nothing is more certain than that its work in every department, if done well, is to be done largely through these committees.

The body of the League is usually too bulky for detailed, which is the same as effective, work. It is too formal for free discussion and intelligent planning. In the committee, the formality vanishes, and the members get nearer to each other; it becomes less like meeting and more like real life and work.

Take the Religious Work Committee. It is well known that no work is so important as that of the devotional meeting. If there is a healthy interest here, you can with reasonable assurance look for good work in the other departments. If this is defective, all life, interest, prosperity, is only seeming and factitious.

Now the interest in this branch of the work does not spring spontaneously, but quite otherwise, with earnest, skillful, constant, patient effort.

A pastor writes, "How do you get your young people to take part in the religious meetings?" a question we have all asked, and do not so easily answer—certainly not without faithful effort. I believe that herein is largely found the solution of that problem—viz., in faithful work by the committee. Is the attendance poor, the interest feeble, participation in the services meager; is it difficult to get leaders; does the whole service go heavily, hobblingly, unsatisfactorily? If so, how can this be remedied? The committee needs to come together. Not for a half hour after some service, when everybody is tired out, and in a hurry to get through and go home. Take an evening, a whole evening; get a full meeting of the committee. Discuss every aspect of the work. How induce young people to lead? Who will lead on the list? What are the best methods of leading? What things need especially to be corrected? What new features introduced? What changes made to lift out of ruts? Who ought to take

part—what part take? How induce them to? and many other kindred questions.

From an evening spent like that, the members of the committee themselves become more interested and enthusiastic, and in the discussions a great many new ideas come out. The very next night, the meeting will be found to carry new life, and it will continue to get better in proportion to the thoroughness of the work done in the committee.

Of course the pastor should be at this meeting. It is here he does his best work, and exerts his most telling influence. Do they discuss methods? He ought from his experience to know more about method than any of the others. He is on hand with many things to suggest. Do they need enthusiasm? He ought to be the most enthusiastic member of the League; and he can impart intelligent enthusiasm here as he does not get the opportunity of doing elsewhere. How often does he save them from panic in the committee. They are discouraged; nobody will lead, few will take part, few attend. The committee are discouraged, and out of patience. He takes a broader and more hopeful view; tells them that there is no occasion for discouragement,

and shows them why there is not. If there is difference of opinion about any matter in the committee, and controversy waxes warm, he is present to arbitrate and soothe by his counsel, influence, and kindness. Do they discuss work? He knows the work as no other does, and can point out what needs doing, who ought to be able to do it, and how it can be done. It is only in the committee that he can do all this with the best advantage, if indeed at all.

Not that the pastor should think, or the committee think, that they cannot have a meeting without his presence. They can and ought to, and when the organization gets well on its feet, and under way, they will do that. But he ought to attend often, for it is through the committee, let him be very sure, that he is to keep his hand upon the machinery, and do for the League the best service.

Now I am quite sure that there is many a pastor who will think it foolish to talk of his attending the meetings of the committees. He thinks that the young people should regard themselves fortunate if he attends the public meeings.

Well, he can make choice of the two alter-

natives. Go and do for them a really helpful work, and have a prosperous League, or stay away, and let them struggle on without him, doing some work, but little, and even more probably going to pieces, and suspending, after a forlorn and constantly losing struggle.

He will especially remember in the committee what was said in the chapter on pastoral authority. Let his attitude toward the committee be that of helper, never that of dictator. Let him give suggestions, but be ready to yield his opinion or plan if a better than his is offered.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PASTOR AND HIS TIME.

I must pause here, and, at the risk of seeming to repeat some things already said, give a special chapter to THE PASTOR AND HIS TIME.

By this he may be losing some of the ardor enkindled in the earlier chapters. He is to keep so close to the League, know it so well, do so much for it, even to the minutest details of its organization and work. Well, he begins to recall that the same must be done for the Sunday school, for the official board, for the ladies' and other societies. He must visit a large membership from house to house, going oftener to see the sick and afflicted. He must preach twice a week, and lecture Wednesday evening. There are scores of outside calls pressing for service. He is dismayed before the appalling magnitude of his work, and thinks he could not possibly accomplish it, unless there were twenty hours instead of twelve in the day, and one hundred

and seventy years instead of seventy in a life-time, and therefore what has been said about the League is simply fine talk after all that practically cannot be worked.

It is true, as every diligent pastor knows, that there is in the pastorate no time for idling. If he seems to idle, it is only that he may catch breath and gather strength for renewed and increased effort. If he supposes that he is to have an easy work, with much spare time on his hands, he has misapprehended the nature of his calling, and had better quit and go at something else. Another was called, and he answered.

But I want to repeat, out of an experience that has tested it practically, and knows whereof it affirms, that the right sort of League does not diminish, but very greatly increases, the pastor's time.

I look at my register. Here is a sick man to be visited; fruit will refresh him and flowers cheer. I cannot go just now, or as often as he needs attention. I report to some member of the League, and it is done. There are strangers to be looked after, people just come to town, and the pastor must see them, and see them again and again, until he gets them

safely housed in some warm Church home. Maybe he finds it exceedingly inconvenient to go just now. He sends the League instead, and half the visits now from him will accomplish twice the good.

There is a poor family to be looked after, and their needs are urgent. It is Saturday afternoon, or as likely Sunday afternoon. He is as busy as mortal man can be already. But he must go to this call, if he talks nonsense to-morrow or this evening in the sermon he is preparing. If he has an Epworth League as convenient, as nimble, as willing, as these young people usually are, he can turn the matter over to them in five minutes, and go back to his sermon without a wave of care or anxiety lest they may not do all that is needed for those who may be distressingly needy. There are some sensitive people who constantly complain that the preacher does not come very often, and the members never. The older members are busy, or averse to that sort of work, and will not do it; but the young people have been trained and will go, doing anything, from holding a prayer meeting to carrying a circular from the official board. God bless them! The pastor can go to see

his members half as often as he did once, and find them in much better humor when he does go.

He does not do as much as he once did, but it is much better done. He is in better health and better cheer. He does wiser pastoral work, better preaching, and better service all around. In truth, so far from taking his time, he suddenly awakens to the delightful consciousness that, through the work of the Epworth League, he has at last (what he never had before, and feared he never would have, but what God surely meant he should have) time enough to do what his hands find to do.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PASTOR AND HIS JOY.

The apostle, writing to the Thessalonians, says : " For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy."

Happy pastor he who can write such things to his cherished people. A pastor's people is not always that. Especially are not his young people. They constitute often his greatest source of anxiety. Many of them live worldly lives, that reproach the Church and dishonor Christ. Some that once seemed kindly and religiously disposed, he sees growing indifferent at length, as there seems little in the Church to foster an active interest.

They are not useful, and as they receive little training probably will never be. For want of exercise, their spiritual powers actually shrink away, and die of pure atrophy. No culture, no loyalty—or little. The pastor must do all the work that is done, or nearly

that pastor. He does not lose, but gains by going—time, life, impetus. It is to him, week after week, a very wellspring of unfailing blessedness.

His young people are no longer worldly, since they have something better than the world to engage them; no longer idle, since they have something to do, and know how to do it; no longer disloyal, but, knowing the Church and its history, are true to its traditions and institutions.

The work is no longer undone, since there are so many to do it. Surely this is his joy and crown of rejoicing.

THE END.